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FLAMEPROOF STYRENIC RESIN COMPOSITION

Field of the Invention

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The present invention relates to a flame retardant styrenic resin composition which has excellent flame retardancy, heat resistance and mechanical strength. More particularly, the present invention relates to a flame retardant rubber-modified polystyrene resin composition employing a ring-shaped alkyl
10 phosphonic acid ester compound as a flame retardant to a base resin consisting of rubber modified polystyrene resin.

Background of the Invention

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A styrenic resin is excellent in mold processability and mechanical properties, therefore, the resin has been widely applied to electric appliances. However the styrenic resin is extremely easily flammable, which can easily make a fire accident. In this regard, the resin is subjected to various mandatory controls on their flammability for the safety reason in United States, Japan and Europe and is
20 required to have high flame retardancy to meet the Underwriter's Laboratories Standard for the use of the housing of electric appliances.

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A widely known method for flame retardancy is that a halogen-containing compound and an antimony-containing compound are added to a rubber modified styrene-containing resin to give a good flame-retardant
25 property. The examples of the halogen-containing compounds used in the method above are, for example, polybromodiphenyl ether, tetrabromobisphenol-A, epoxy compounds substituted by bromine, chlorinated polyethylene, etc. An antimony trioxide or an antimony pentaoxide is commonly used as an antimony-containing compound.

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The methods for improving the flame-retardant property by applying a

halogen- and antimony-containing compound have advantages such as easy acquirement of the flame-retardant property and no degradation of the physical properties. However, the disadvantages could be observed that the halogen-containing compound results in the corrosion of the mold itself by the hydrogen halide gases released during the molding process and is fatally harmful due to the toxic gases liberated in case of fire. Especially, since a polybromodiphenyl ether, mainly used for a halogen-containing flame retardant, can produce toxic gases such as dioxin or furan during combustion, a major concern in this field is to develop a flame retardant which is prepared without a halogen-containing compound.

U.S. patent No. 4,526,917 discloses use of a TPP and a mono phosphoric acid ester compound having a mesityl group to a base resin comprising a polyphenylene ether resin and a styrenic resin to improve flame retardancy of the resin composition. However, in the patent, the amount of polyphenylene ether is more than 20 %, which makes it difficult to obtain dripping flame retardancy while maintaining its flowability. Moreover, the heat resistance of the resin composition is lowered due to addition of TPP.

Japanese Patent Laid-open No. 7-043,769 discloses that the use of phosphoric acid ester compound having a substituent containing 12 to 25 carbon atoms derived from TPP may obtain flame-retardancy of V2 and improved volatility at 250 °C.

U.S. patent Nos. 3,789,091 and 3,849,368 disclose that a ring-type phosphonic acid ester compound can be used as a flame retardant to a polyethylene terephthalate, PAN, polyurethane, polystyrene or nylon.

In view of the above-mentioned patents, there have been many attempts to provide flame retardancy by using a phosphoric acid ester compound as a halogen-free flame retardant, but none of the publication discloses a resin composition with good mechanical strength, heat resistance and dripping flame-retardancy without polyphenylene ether by using only phosphorus-based compound and rubber

modified polystyrene resin.

So, the present inventors have developed a flame retardant styrenic resin composition which has good flame retardancy as well as mechanical strength and heat resistance by employing a ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester
5 compound as a flame retardant to a base resin consisting of rubber modified polystyrene resin. The resin composition of the present invention may further contain polyphenylene ether optionally.

Objects of the Invention

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An object of the present invention is to provide an environment-friendly flame retardant styrenic resin composition which does not cause toxic gases in case of fire.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a flame retardant
15 styrenic resin composition having stability for the fire.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a flame retardant styrenic resin composition with good heat resistance.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a flame retardant styrenic resin composition with good mechanical strength useful for the housing
20 of electric appliances.

Other objects and advantages of this invention will be apparent from the ensuing disclosure and appended claims.

Summary of the Invention

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The flameproof styrenic resin composition according to the present invention comprises (A) 70 to 99.5 parts by weight of a rubber-modified polystyrene resin, (B) 0.5 to 20 parts by weight of a ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound and, optionally, (C) 0 to 10 parts by weight of a
30 polyphenylene ether.

Detailed Description of the Invention

(A) Rubber-modified Polystyrene Resin

5 A rubber-modified polystyrene resin used in the present invention as a base resin can be prepared by blending a rubber, an aromatic mono-alkenyl monomer and/or alkyl ester monomer and polymerizing with heat or a polymerization initiator.

The Rubber which can be used in this invention includes polybutadiene,
10 polyisoprenes, styrene-butadiene copolymers and alkylacrylic rubbers. The amount of the rubber is 3 to 30 parts by weight, preferably 5 to 15 parts by weight.

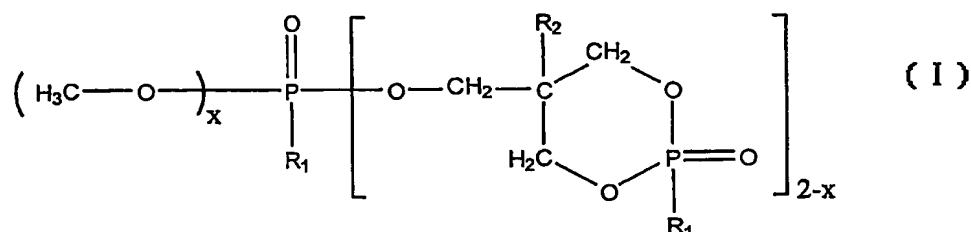
Further, the monomer used in rubber-modified polystyrene is one or more monomer selected from the group consisting of aromatic mono-alkenyl monomer, alkyl ester monomers of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid and is used in an
15 amount of 70-97 parts by weight, preferably 85-95 parts by weight.

The resin composition of the present invention can be polymerized with heat or a polymerization initiator. The polymerization initiator used in the present invention may be one or more selected from the group consisting of organic peroxides such as benzoyl peroxide, t-butyl hydroperoxide, acetyl peroxide and
20 cumene hydroperoxide or azo compounds such as azobisisobutyronitrile (AIBN).

The rubber-modified polystyrene resin of the present invention can be produced by a known polymerization method such as bulk polymerization, suspension polymerization, emulsion polymerization or combination thereof. Among them, the bulk polymerization is preferred. To acquire optimum physical
25 properties in consideration of the blend of rubber-modified polystyrene resin and polyphenylene ether, the average size of rubber particles is preferably in the range of from 0.5 to 2.0 μm .

(B) Ring-shaped Alkyl Phosphonic Acid ester Compound

The ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound of the present invention is represented by the following chemical Formula (I):



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wherein R_1 and R_2 are independently of each other C_1 - C_4 alkyl and x is 0 or 1.

Examples of the ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound having the structural formula (I) include methyl-bis(5-ethyl-2-methyl-1,3,2-dioxaphorinan-5yl) methyl methyl phosphonic acid ester P-oxide, methyl-bis(5-ethyl-2-methyl-1,3,2-dioxaphorinan-5yl) phosphonic acid ester P, P'-dioxide.

The ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound(B) of present invention is used in the amount of from 0.5 to 20 parts by weight, preferably 0.5 to 6 parts by weight, more preferably 0.5 to 2 parts by weight per 70 to 99.5 parts by weight of the rubber modified styrenic resin(A). If the amount of the ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound is added less than 0.5 parts by weight, the resin composition has poor flame retardancy. On the other hand, if the amount of the ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound is more than 20 parts by weight, heat resistance of the resin composition is lowered.

(C) Polyphenylene Ether (PPE)

Polyethylene ether is added to the rubber-modified styrenic resin to

improve flame retardancy and heat resistance.

Examples of the polyphenylene ether resin include poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene)ether, poly(2,6-diethyl-1,4-phenylene)ether, poly(2,6-dipropyl-1,4-phenylene)ether, poly(2-methyl-6-ethyl-1,4-phenylene)ether,
5 poly(2-methyl-6-propyl-1,4-phenylene) ether,
poly(2-ethyl-6-propyl-1,4-phenylene) ether, poly(2,6-diphenyl-1,4-phenylene) ether, copolymer of poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether and
poly(2,3,6-trimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether, and copolymer of
poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether and poly(2,3,5-triethyl-1,4-phenylene)
10 ether. Preferably, copolymer of poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether and
poly(2,3,6-trimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether, and
poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether are preferably used, more preferably
poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) ether is preferably used.

The degree of polymerization of polyphenylene ether is not limited
15 specifically, but considering heat-stability or processability of the resin
composition, it is preferable that the viscosity of polyphenylene ether is in the
range of about 0.2 to 0.8 measured in chloroform solvent at 25 °C.

The flame retardant resin composition of the present invention may further
20 contain conventional plastic additives, for example, plasticizers, heat stabilizers,
anti-oxidants, light stabilizers, compatibilizers, pigment, dye and/or inorganic
filler. The inorganic filler can be asbestos, glass fiber, talc, ceramic and
sulfonate etc. The additives are employed in the amount of 0 to 50 parts by
weight on the basis of 100 parts by weight of the base resin.

25 The present invention may be better understood by reference to the
following examples that are intended for the purpose of illustration and are not to be
construed as in any way limiting the scope of the present invention, which is defined
in the claims appended hereto. In the following examples, all parts and percentage
are by weight unless otherwise indicated.

Examples

The components to prepare flame retardant styrenic resin compositions in Examples 1 ~ 6 and Comparative Examples 1 ~ 2 are as follows:

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(A) Rubber Modified Polystyrene Resin

HIPS(High Impact Polystyrene) of Cheil Industries Inc. (Product name: HR-1380F) was used. The particle size of butadiene rubber was 1.5 μm . And the
10 content of rubber was 6.5 % by weight.

(B) Ring-shaped Alkyl Phosphonic Acid Ester Compound

Antiblaze 1045 of Rhodia Co. which contains 20.8 % of phosphorus [a
15 mixture of 8 % by weight of methyl-bis(5-ethyl-2-methyl-1,3,2-dioxaphorinan-5yl) methyl methyl phosphonic acid ester P-oxide and 85 % by weight of methyl-bis (5-ethyl-2-methyl-1,3,2-dioxaphorinan-5yl) phosphonic acid ester P, P'-dioxide] was used.

20 (B') Aromatic Phosphoric Acid Ester Compound

Triphenylphosphate with a melting point of 48 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ was used.

(C) Polyphenylene Ether Resin (PPE)

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A poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene)ether by Asahi Co. of Japan (Product name: P-402) was used as PPE. The particles had the average size of several microns (μm) and were in the form of powder.

Examples 1~6

The components as shown in Table 1 were mixed and the mixture was extruded at 200~280 °C with a conventional twin screw extruder in pellets. The resin pellets were dried at 80 °C for 3 hours, and molded into test specimens for measuring flame retardancy using a 6 oz injection molding machine at 180~280 °C and barrel temperature of 40~80 °C.

The flame retardancy of the test specimens was measured in accordance with UL94VB with a thickness of 1/8". The impact strength was measured according to Izod impact strength ASTM D-256 A (1/8" notch). The heat resistance was measured according to ASTM D-1525 under 5 kg. The color and heat stability was measured according to ASTM D-4459 based on cream color. The test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

	Examples					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
(A) HIPS	100	100	100	100	100	100
(B) Ring-shaped Alkyl Phosphonic Acid Ester Compound	3	6	3	3	1.5	1.5
(C) PPE	-	-	5	10	-	5
UL94 flame retardancy (1/8")	V2	V2	V2	V2	V2	V2
Izod impact strength 1/8" (kgf · cm/cm)	10	9	10	9	11	10
Vicat Softening Temperature (°C)	92	89	97	102	94	99
color and heat stability (DE)	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2

Comparative Examples 1~2

Comparative Examples 1 was conducted in the same manner as in Example 1 except that triphenylphosphate was used as a flame retardant instead of the ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound. Comparative Example 2 was conducted in the same manner as in Example 4 except that triphenylphosphate was used as a flame retardant instead of the ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound. The test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

	Comparative Example 1	Comparative Example 2
(A) HIPS	100	100
(B') triphenylphosphate	8	8
(C)PPE	-	10
UL 94 flame retardancy (1/8")	Fail	Fail
Izod impact strength 1/8" (kgf · cm/cm)	5	6
Vicat Softening Temperature (°C)	73	80
Color and heat stability (DE)	0.2	0.3

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As shown above, the resin compositions employing a ring-shaped alkyl phosphonic acid ester compound as a flame retardant show good flame retardancy and heat resistance without no deterioration of impact strength compared to those employing an aromatic phosphoric acid ester compound.

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The present invention can be easily carried out by an ordinary skilled person in the art. Many modifications and changes may be deemed to be with the scope of the present invention as defined in the following claims.